

**Rep. Joseph R. Pitts**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Hearing**  
**“PPACA Implementation Failures: Didn’t Know or Didn’t Disclose?”**  
**October 24, 2013**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HHS officials repeatedly assured this Committee that the Administration would be ready for October 1, 2013. This past July, the Secretary stated that HHS would “flip on the switch on October 1 and say to people, ‘Come on and sign up.’”

On August 1, Administrator Tavenner told us in this very room that CMS would finish “all end to end testing” by the end of August.

On September 10, the Health Subcommittee held a hearing at which representatives for CGI Federal, QSSI, Equifax, and Serco – all of whom are here today – testified. Each contractor assured us that its components of the Exchange would be ready on time.

And, yet, when the Exchanges opened for business on October 1, it was nothing less than an unmitigated disaster.

We are now hearing reports that the Administration was repeatedly warned that the site was not ready for an October 1 launch.

The *Washington Post* reported Tuesday that “as late as Sept. 26, there had been no tests to determine whether a consumer could complete the process from beginning to end.” Secretary Sebelius said just this week that “almost no testing occurred.”

These past few weeks of Exchange dysfunction, along with stories of hundreds of thousands of Americans losing their existing health plans, help underscore why Washington should not be running our private health insurance system.

The botched rollout is all the more reason that the individual mandate penalty should be delayed. Average Americans deserve a waiver from Obamacare, too – it’s only fair when the exchanges are such a mess.

The companies represented here today were in charge of building the federal Exchange, but CMS was responsible for ensuring that everything worked together properly.

So, the question we have to ask ourselves, in light of all of the Administration's assurances, is this: are they simply incompetent or were they just lying to the American people?

I yield back.